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24 September 1973

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: OCI and OPR: Missions and Styles

1. ONE and SRS are to disappear and OPR to appear. The latter is not either of the former--it is a brand new entity. OPR will share with OCI an obvious overlap in subject matter. Thus it is natural for many officers now doing political intelligence to wonder which office--OPR or OCI--might provide the more suitable and satisfying work.

2. Both offices need officers with many of the same talents. A lively interest in political affairs, expertise in a given subject, and the ability to keep on learning are in demand in both. Neither has use for poor writers. Nevertheless, a few distinctions can be drawn.

3. OCI requires men and women who can make responsible judgments about events as they happen--their local meaning and their relevance to US concerns--and rapidly convert these into good prose. A key part of the job is reportorial; OCI is expected to be the first in print with new information, intelligently selected and accurately presented. Even more important is the analytical input. Ideally this accompanies the first reportorial presentation and is then further developed in subsequent production and in support of the NSC Staff.

4. The task of following the news requires flexible work habits from OCI officers. They must be able to work in short bursts, occasionally at odd and inconvenient hours, against short deadlines and changing signals. OCI will maintain "country desks". The officers manning these desks will

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be expected to read the traffic as it comes in, and to maintain close contact with, and provide support to, the NSC Staff. They have to work across a range of specifications, from factual pieces that primarily pull together the data to thoughtful analytic memoranda on subjects of key interest to US policymakers. The advent of an OCI-produced newspaper, if it occurs, will not reduce OCI's responsibility for producing the latter kind of papers.

5. OCI lives by its specialists, but it has a greater need than other production units for flexible officers. Because its tasks are many and varied--and because it is generally first to feel the influence of changes in external demand--it needs a certain number of officers who can fill staff assignments, manage different forms of intelligence production, or shift substantive fields.

6. The requirements of OPR are not yet so clear, since it is being created to take up new work. But some of the contrasts to OCI can be drawn. OPR will overlap with OCI on subject matter. OCI will have continuing and comprehensive responsibility for all areas of the world while OPR's focus will be far more selective both in terms of the particular countries or regions and in terms of the particular aspects of these countries or regions under study at any one time. In order to focus more sharply on doing original political research and in-depth analysis, OPR analysts will need to be protected from the frequent interruptions which are a daily occurrence in OCI. The emphasis in OPR will be on devising fresh and imaginative approaches to and developing new insights into problems of major importance and of major concern to policymakers. Some of this work will be analogous to that done in the most thorough and penetrating works of ONE and the DDI production offices during the last few years. As much as anything, OPR will be charged with finding out new things, with exhausting the evidence in a search for new relations and additional meanings. As a part of its endeavors, it will have to develop comprehensive and meaningful pictures of the way in which certain foreign political structures and world political forces operate.

7. This is original work, and it calls for research abilities: thoroughness, persistence, a willingness to dig in the primary sources and continue to dig in the face of

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discouragement. But it also calls for imaginativeness, analytical sensitivity and--not least--the writing skill to convey the findings in such fashion that senior consumers will in fact read these "more reflective" pieces they have asked CIA to do. If the OCI officer prides himself on being fully abreast of current developments, the OPR officer should get his corresponding satisfactions from being the analyst who has been to the very bottom of the problem, returning with all there is to know and a clear identification of what remains unknown.

8. This kind of work requires an analyst who can function effectively as part of a project-team and can, alternatively, carry multi-stage work, sometimes prolonged, on a largely independent basis. His hours will be more regular and his work schedule more predictable than those of the typical OCI analyst. Rather than complete several small projects a week, he will often have to sustain his attack on a single problem for weeks or months. He will have to keep up with the substantive traffic in his subject area, but he will not have to be current at all times, and he should not need to see his work frequently in print. His growth will take place in terms of mastering an ever-increasing portion of his original field and adjacent fields, and his--non-monetary--reward is recognition as CIA's, and the USG's, premier specialist in his field.

9. In comparison to his OCI colleague, the OPR officer will need to pay more attention to various new fields and methods of political analysis, to determine whether they can refine existing useful approaches or force previously intractable problems to yield. He will also have a greater need to develop and maintain fruitful contacts with outside researchers, since counterparts in the institutes and universities have more to offer him than they do the current intelligence officer. He will have a greater need for language competence and use it more.

10. Perhaps one point should be emphasized that is common to both OPR and OCI officers and that, at this time, takes high priority. Neither should think that he is going to be able to spend most of his time doing his own thing. The Agency cannot invest its limited resources in subjects of little relevance to US policy. An OCI analyst covering several minor countries, however brilliant his work and

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however great his intellectual devotion to his assignment, will not regularly break into print in the central publications. An OPR analyst, however deep his fascination with a given topic, will not be permitted to invest weeks or months of study in it without a prior showing of its potential relevance to US policy concerns. He will be encouraged to formulate and design promising projects, but there will then have to be clear indication of consumer interest before he charges ahead.

11. Between the current intelligence article and the detailed research paper lies a broad range of production. Near to the middle of that range lies the estimative art form, as embodied in NIEs, NSSMs, and estimative memoranda that require complex, long-range intelligence judgments expressed in prose that has directness, precision, and some grace. Officers interested in this art form naturally want to know whether OCI or OPR will get this account.

12. At present, sharp lines cannot be drawn. There are still too many uncertainties about such matters as the future organization of work in the intelligence community, the forms of coordination, and the role of the National Intelligence Officers. Because of the selective nature of the work of OPR, however, the most likely solution is that the bulk of the estimative work and contributions to NSSMs and special memoranda will fall to OCI. This is not to say that OPR will not participate in such work, but that OPR's participation will be the exception rather than the rule, arising principally on those projects for which a particular OPR officer has unique qualifications, or when on-going projects in OPR clearly relate closely to the estimative task.

13. An officer in either office should not expect estimative work to be his major responsibility. The first task of OCI will be to produce current intelligence in whatever form the NSC requires; the first task of OPR will be to conduct original political research and analysis. Aptitude and appetite for these functions should be the main criteria. The strictly estimative career is no more, but carrying forward the work that permits incisive and objective national estimates becomes everyone's responsibility.

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